



Dothan Fire Department POLICY	
Policy Name:	Social Media Policy
Policy Number:	18
Standard:	TBD
Implementation Date:	July 9, 2016
Date of Last Revision:	April 27, 2021
Authority:	Larry H. Williams, Jr, Fire Chief

I. PURPOSE

To establish a policy for appropriate use of social media by members of the Dothan Fire Department.

II. POLICY

The City Dothan Personnel Board has adopted and implemented a social media policy that all employees are required to follow and adhere to at all times.

III. The Dothan Fire Department supports this policy and will ensure that all members follow the guidelines set forth in the document, “City of Dothan Social Media Policy” – See attached. All members should familiarize themselves with this and all policies regarding social media.

IV. The Dothan Fire Department provides all members access to fire department social media sites through the Dothan Fire Department App or by using the url: www.dothanfd.org. These are excellent resources for keeping all members up-to-date with the latest, most accurate web based postings. All members are encouraged to download the App and visit the web site.

V. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY

The Fire Chief reserves the authority to amend, modify, or change this policy.

VI. APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is adopted and approved on this 27th day of April, 2021.

(Signature On File)

Larry H. Williams, Jr.
Fire Chief
DOTHAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

City of Dothan

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

To establish a policy for appropriate use of social media by City of Dothan employees.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of the City of Dothan. It is not the City's intent to control what its employees say on personal social media sites, but all employees must understand that all policies, including those on anti-harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and conduct unbecoming extend to all forms of communication.

Policy Statement

All employees must follow the City's guidelines for use of social media as set forth below.

A. GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, *social media* can mean many things. *Social media* includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the City of Dothan, as well as any other form of electronic communication. The same principles and guidelines found in the City's policies related to workplace conduct apply to the employee's activities online. Ultimately, employees are solely responsible for what they post online. Before creating online content, consider the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects customers, the general public, and contractors may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1. Know and follow the rules.

Carefully read this Policy and the Personnel Rules and Regulations on workplace conduct, internet usage, confidential and proprietary information, workplace violence, and harassment, and ensure that your postings and other social media activities are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

2. Protect confidential information.

- Maintain the confidentiality of City of Dothan trade secrets, departmental practices and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post any reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications without authorized permission.

- Maintain the confidentiality of any information protected by the attorney-client privilege.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the City of Dothan customers' information and general public. Do not post any information about other employees, customers, vendors, contractors, partners, representatives, or others associated with the City of Dothan.
- Respect financial disclosure laws.
- Observe all copyright and other intellectual property laws, and show proper respect for the copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity and other intellectual property of the City of Dothan and other entities.

3. Be transparent.

- **Express only your personal opinions.** Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the City of Dothan if not authorized to do so. Your social media profile and line of discussion/comments may directly affect the workplace or negatively impact the public trust of the City of Dothan as a public employer. If the City is a subject of the content on a social media site, the comments made by an employee causing discord and disruption to the workplace is not protected speech. Keep in mind your actions, comments, and conduct that adversely affects your job and the City as an employer is prohibited.
- Any conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects customers, the general public, and contractors may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

4. Be respectful.

Always be fair and courteous to others, including fellow employees, customers, contractors, or people who work on behalf of the City of Dothan. Also, keep in mind that employee-employer related complaints should be handled through the channels outlined in the City of Dothan Personnel Rules and Regulations. Such complaints should be presented to the Personnel Department or EEO Office for processing. Do not post complaints or criticism or use statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, employees, or contractors, or that might constitute harassment, discrimination, or bullying.

Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other status protected by law or City of Dothan policy. Consistent with City policy, using social media as an outlet for discriminatory, harassing, or threatening behavior may subject you to discipline, up to and including termination.

5. Be honest and accurate.

Ensure all posted information is honest and accurate information or news, and if an error is made, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts that have been altered. Remember the

internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors about the City of Dothan, fellow employees, customers, contractors, or people working on behalf of the City.

6. Retaliation is prohibited.

The City of Dothan prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this Policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this Policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

7. Be careful in responding to negative comments.

You may encounter or be the recipient of negative or disparaging comments or posts about the City and/or an employee(s), or see third parties attempting to spark negative conversations. Before reacting, carefully consider the appropriateness of your response and the consequences that might follow from it. Remember that as a City employee, you are bound by this Policy and all other City policies. If you come across material that requires a response from the City of Dothan or involves discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, intimidation or bullying, alert the Personnel Department or EEO Office to the existence of the material.

B. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CITY BUSINESS

Only those employees who are specifically authorized by the City of Dothan may use social media on behalf of the City. Employees who have been specifically authorized by the City to use social media on the City's behalf must follow the appropriate actions and behavior in disseminating facts and events that are sanctioned by the City. These guidelines are in addition to the responsibilities and obligations set forth above for personal use of social media.

GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AUTHORIZED TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE CITY'S BEHALF

These guidelines should be followed by employees who have been specifically authorized by the City of Dothan to use social media on the City's behalf. These guidelines are in addition to the responsibilities and obligations set forth above for personal use of social media.

Approved Users and Content

At this time, only certain employees in the City of Dothan are authorized to use social media on behalf of the City. Unless and until the City specifically authorizes you to do so, you may not use social media on behalf of the City.

If you are authorized to participate in social media as a City of Dothan representative, you should:

- Obtain all required approvals from the Department Head/City Manager before posting on behalf of the City.
- Not engage with the news media via social media platforms to discuss the City of Dothan without prior approval.
- Identify yourself and your role when speaking on behalf of the City of Dothan.

Crisis Communication

In the event of a crisis at the City of Dothan, the City may use its social media platforms to communicate with employees, the community and the media. If you are asked by the City of Dothan to respond to a crisis using social media, you should:

- Remain calm;
- Follow all instructions provided by Department Head/City Manager, and
- Follow the posts that appear on the Crisis Communication Website.